

REUSABLE ORNAMENT AND REUSABLE ORNAMENT COUPLING APPARATUS AND METHOD

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The invention relates generally to a coupling apparatus and method for attaching and deattaching reusable ornaments, as well as to reusable ornaments and/or other ornamentation. In particular, the invention relates to a coupling apparatus and method for detachably coupling ornaments, such as ribbons, bows, crayon boxes, and other types of ornamental decorations, to gift wrapping that has been or is to be wrapped around a gift. The coupling apparatus can also be used to attach to gift packages, bags, boxes, pre-wrapped boxes or items, baskets, or floral arrangements, by way of example but not by way of limitation.

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

[0002] There currently are various products available for decorating gift packages, bags, boxes and other items. One such decorating object is the traditional gift bow. The gift bow is designed for single use, but many people reuse them. Gift bows often dislodge from packages because the self-adhesive or "sticky" backing that adheres the gift bows to gift wrapping on a gift package is not adequate to attach it strongly to the gift wrap on the gift package. This is especially the case when the gift bow has been removed at least once from a gift package, so as to be reused at a later date. After being detached from a gift package, the stickiness of the adhesive remaining on the backing of the gift bow is compromised. The backing

collects debris (e.g., dust and/or hairs) during its exposure to the environment. The backing also loses some of the stickiness properties since the adhesive strip is only designed for a single use and some adhesive is lost to the original object to which the bow was attached. These factors make it difficult to reattach the gift bow to another gift package.

[0003] It is also difficult to reattach gift bows to gift packages in an attractive manner. Usually, tape is used to adhere the gift bow to a gift package, to ensure a strong attachment of the bow to the gift wrap. However, tape (even transparent tape) can be easily seen around the bow, thereby detracting from the attractiveness of the gift package, and drawing attention to the fact that the gift bow is one that has been reused.

[0004] Furthermore, traditional bows do not facilitate creativity. Most bows are made out of paper or metallic ribbon. They are usually limited in design and are not used in combination with other items. They can be crushed accidentally and are easily damaged. Their uses are typically limited to decorating paper wrapped boxes. They are neither durable enough nor sufficiently creative for other uses.

[0005] Reusable gift wrapping has been developed. One type has multiple fabric pieces that must be cut, hemmed and sewn together. U.S. Patent No. 5,004,144 to Betty J. Selga, describes a reusable gift wrapping with releasable Velcro® fasteners secured to its periphery. The Selga reference describes a bow that can be releasably attached to reusable gift wrapping, by way of flexible hook and loop fasteners, also known as Velcro® fasteners. The male Velcro® portion (with hooks) is sewn onto the bow, to allow the bow to be releasably attached to a female Velcro® portion (with loops or mesh-like material) that is attached to the reusable gift wrapping. That way, both the reusable gift wrapping and the bow can be reused for

another gift. For convenience, throughout this application, male hook fasteners, as well as mating female meshlike or loop fasteners, are referred to as Velcro® fasteners. Those of ordinary skill will recognize that Velcro® is a brand name and that other brands of hook and loop fasteners and/or other types of attachable and detachable fasteners may be substituted without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as described below. Unless otherwise specified herein, the male and female portions of a mating pair of such Velcro® fasteners can be interchanged with each other.

[0006] While the bow described in the Selga reference is capable of reuse, the mechanism for releasably attaching the reusable bow to gift wrapping has problems, and may cause damage to the bow when the bow is removed from the gift wrapping. In addition, the mechanism for releasably attaching the bow to gift wrapping, as described in the Selga reference, is not conducive to attaching other ornaments to gift wrapping.

[0007] U.S. Patent No. 5,904,289 to Laura Hagan describes reusable gift wrap including a fabric bow and ribbon that are removably attached to an outer surface of a fabric sheet. Though not described, the bow appears to be removably attached and deattached by one having to manually tie and untie the ribbon from the reusable gift wrap, respectively.

[0008] Various types of bows, some of them being reusable, are also known conventionally. For example, U.S. Patent No. 5,156,893 to Robert Barthe, U.S. Patent No. 4,840,822 to Peter Cheng, U.S. Patent No. Des. 298,306 to Francis Hunstiger, U.S. Patent No. 4,724,175 to Paul LaBrosse et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,840,689 to Olaf Raiskums, U.S. Patent No. 6,074,712 to James Ramirez, U.S. Patent No. 5,545,445 to Peter Cheng, U.S. Patent No. 4,968,540 to James Linsenbigler, U.S. Patent No. 4,826,712 to Mark

etc. This allows for the ornamental items to be reused, without causing damage to these items.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

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[0012] According to one aspect of the invention, there is provided an attachment mechanism for a first object to be releasably attached to a second object. The attachment mechanism includes a first adhesive strip that has a first adhering surface for adhering to the first object. The attachment mechanism also includes a backer/stabilizer that has a first surface that is adhered to a second adhering surface of the first adhesive strip. The attachment mechanism further includes a first Velcro® pad that has a back side that is adhered to a second surface of the backer/stabilizer. The attachment mechanism still further includes a second Velcro® pad that is configured to be releasably attached to the first Velcro® pad. The attachment mechanism also includes a second adhesive strip that has a first adhering surface for adhering to a back side of the second Velcro® pad. The second adhesive strip also includes a second adhering surface for adhering to a surface of the second object.

[0013] According to another aspect of the invention, there is provided an attachment mechanism for a first object to be releasably attached to a second object. The attachment mechanism includes a backer/stabilizer that has a first surface and a second surface opposite the first surface. The attachment mechanism also includes a first Velcro® pad that has a front side with a Velcro® surface and a back side that is adhered to a second surface of the backer/stabilizer. The attachment mechanism further includes a second Velcro® pad that has a front side with a Velcro® surface and which is configured to be releasably attached to the front side of the first Velcro®

pad. The attachment mechanism also includes a second adhesive strip that has a first adhering surface for adhering to a back side of the second Velcro® pad, and a second adhering surface for adhering to a surface of the second object. The attachment mechanism still further includes means for attaching the backer/stabilizer to the first object.

~~[0014] According to yet another aspect of the invention, there is provided an attachment mechanism for a first object to be releasably attached to a second object, the first object including a tying element having first and second ends. The tying element may be made of covered wire, wire, nylon, plastic, ribbon, or any other suitable material that suggests itself. The preferred embodiment utilizes a covered wire tie, but a zip lock tie, wire, plastic tie, ribbon, clamp, adjustable ring, string, thread, or any other style of a tying element that suggests itself to one skilled in the art may be used instead. It may also be sewn on. Alternatively, if the backer/stabilizer is made out of plastic, it can be heated, and a wire or other attachment device can be inserted into the heated plastic, to thereby rigidly couple the backer/stabilizer to the wire or other attachment device.~~

[0015] The attachment mechanism includes a backer/stabilizer that has a first surface and a second surface opposite the first surface, whereby the backer/stabilizer includes at least a first hole and a second hole. The attachment mechanism also includes a first Velcro® pad that has a front side with a Velcro® surface and a back side that is adhered to a second surface of the backer/stabilizer. The attachment mechanism further includes a second Velcro® pad that has a front side with a Velcro® surface which is configured to be releasably attached to the front side of the first Velcro® pad. The attachment mechanism further includes a second adhesive strip that has a first adhering surface for adhering to a back side of the second

Velcro® pad, and a second adhering surface for adhering to a surface of the second object. The first and second ends of the tying element are fitted through the first and second holes of the backer/stabilizer, and the first and second ends of the wire are twisted together after being fitted through the first and second holes of the backer/stabilizer, to provide a coupling of the first object to the backer/stabilizer. The backer/stabilizer may attach to the first object by any of a variety of ways, such as by a ^{braid?} braid, a spike, stapled thereto, or by any other method of attachment that would lend itself to one skilled in the art

~~[0046] According to still another aspect of the invention, there is provided an attachment device for releasably attaching a first object to a second object. The attachment device includes an elastic band. Alternatively, other means of attachment may be used instead of an elastic band, such as a ribbon. The attachment device also includes a backer/stabilizer having at least two regions for receiving respective ends of the elastic band. The attachment device further includes a first Velcro® pad that is adhesively coupled to one surface of the backer/stabilizer, whereby a portion of the elastic band is disposed between the first Velcro® pad and the one surface of the backer/stabilizer. The attachment device also includes a second Velcro® pad that has a first Velcro® surface that is configured to be releasably coupled to the first Velcro® pad. The attachment device still further includes an adhesive material provided on a second, non-Velcro® surface of the second Velcro® pad. The adhesive material is adapted to be adhered to the second object (by first removing a protective peel off covering from the second surface), and the elastic band is adapted to be fitted around a portion of the first object.~~

[0017] According to another aspect of the invention, there is provided a reusable ornament for attachment to gift wrap wrapped around an item to be decorated. The reusable ornament includes an ornamental portion. The reusable ornament also includes a coupling portion for coupling the ornamental portion to the gift wrap. The coupling portion includes a ribbon for wrapping around a package covered by the gift wrap. The ribbon may be used alone, or it may have a piece of Velcro provided on a first surface for ornamentation, or ornamentation such as a bow may already be attached to the ribbon.

[0018] The ribbon includes a first Velcro® pad provided adjacent a first end of the ribbon on a first surface of the ribbon. The ribbon also includes a second Velcro® pad provided adjacent a second end of the ribbon on a second surface of the ribbon opposite the first surface. The ribbon further includes (an optional) a third Velcro® pad provided on the first surface of the ribbon. The third Velcro® pad is adapted to be coupled to a Velcro® pad disposed on the ornamental portion of the reusable ornament. The first and second Velcro® pads are adapted to be coupled to each other when the ribbon is wrapped around the item it is decorating, such as being wrapped around a gift package, to decorate a lamp post, a chandelier, a banister, etc.

[0019] According to still yet another aspect of the invention, there is provided a storage element for storing reusable ornaments. The storage element includes a plurality of rows and columns of Velcro® pads, disposed on the storage element, each of said Velcro® pads configured to hold one reusable ornament in place between uses of the reusable ornament. Each reusable ornament includes an attachment device having a Velcro® portion for coupling to one of the Velcro® pads of the storage element.

[0020] According to yet another aspect of the invention, there is provided a reusable object. The reusable object includes a container portion for holding an element to be stored therewithin. The reusable object also includes a lid portion for coupling to the container portion to encompass the element within the container portion and the lid portion. The reusable object further includes an attachment device coupled to the container portion. The attachment device includes a first Velcro® pad that has an adhesive surface for attachment to an outer surface of the container portion. The attachment device also includes a second Velcro® pad that has an adhesive surface for attachment to another object, wherein the first and second Velcro® pads each has a Velcro® surface for releasably coupling the first and second Velcro® pads to each other, to thereby releasably couple the reusable object to the another object. Magnets may also be used in an alternative construction.

[0021] According to still another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for constructing an attachment device for releasably attaching a first object to a second object. The method includes a step of attaching a backer/stabilizer to the first object. The method also includes a step of attaching a non-Velcro® surface of a first Velcro® pad to the backer/stabilizer. The method further includes a step of attaching a non-Velcro® surface of a second Velcro® pad to the second object. The method still further includes a step of coupling respective Velcro® surfaces of the first and second Velcro® pads to each other. In an alternative configuration, the Velcro is attached directly to an object to be decorated, by way of an adhesive surface on the non-Velcro side of one of the Velcro pads.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0022] The foregoing advantages and features of the invention will become apparent upon reference to the following detailed description and the accompanying drawings, of which:

[0023] Figure 1 shows a front view of a bow that can be attached to gift wrapping by way of an attachment according to a first embodiment of the invention;

[0024] Figure 2 shows a back view of a bow that can be attached to gift wrapping by way of an attachment mechanism according to the first embodiment of the invention;

[0025] Figure 3 shows the elements making up an attachment mechanism according to the first embodiment of the invention;

[0026] Figure 4 shows one configuration of a back side of a bow that may be utilized with a different configuration of an attachment device according to the first embodiment of the invention;

[0027] Figure 5 shows another configuration of a back side of the bow, whereby an attachment mechanism according to first embodiment of the invention is configured to be attached to a central part of the bow;

[0028] Figure 6 shows a different configuration of an attachment mechanism according to the first embodiment of the invention;

[0029] Figure 7 shows a different configuration of an attachment mechanism according to the first embodiment of the invention;

[0030] Figure 8 shows one configuration of a backer/stabilizer of an attachment mechanism according to a first embodiment of the invention;

[0031] Figure 9 shows a barrette slidably coupled to the Figure 8 configuration of an attachment mechanism according to the first embodiment of the invention;

[0032] Figure 10 shows a front side of an object that has an attachment device according to a second embodiment of the invention provided thereon;

[0033] Figure 11 shows a back side of an object that has an attachment device according to the second embodiment of the invention provided thereon;

[0034] Figure 12 shows one side of an attachment mechanism according to a third embodiment of the invention;

[0035] Figure 13 shows an opposite side of the attachment mechanism according to the third embodiment of the invention;

[0036] Figure 14 shows various elements of an attachment device according to several embodiments of the invention separated from each other in an exploded view;

[0037] Figure 15 shows an exploded view of an attachment device according to different configurations of the third embodiment of the invention;

[0038] Figure 16 shows a back perspective view of the backer/stabilizer according to the Figure 15 configuration of the third embodiment of the invention;

[0039] Figure 17 shows yet another configuration of a backer/stabilizer according to the first or second embodiments of the invention;

[0040] Figure 18 shows yet another configuration of a backer/stabilizer according to the first or second embodiments of the invention;

[0041] Figure 19 shows yet another configuration of a backer/stabilizer according to the first or second embodiments of the invention;

[0042] Figure 20 shows yet another configuration of a backer/stabilizer according to the first or second embodiments of the invention;

[0043] Figure 21 shows an attachment device having a backer/stabilizer of any of Figures 17-20 according to the first or second embodiments of the invention, with an elastic band fitted thereon to provide a coupling to an object by way of the elastic band;

[0044] Figure 22 shows yet another configuration of a backer/stabilizer according to the first or second embodiments of the invention;

[0045] Figure 23 shows yet another configuration of a backer/stabilizer according to the first or second embodiments of the invention;

[0046] Figure 24 shows yet another configuration of a backer/stabilizer according to the first or second embodiments of the invention;

[0047] Figure 25 shows yet another configuration of a backer/stabilizer according to the first or second embodiments of the invention;

[0048] Figure 26 shows a top view of a floral attachment that may be attached to a backer/stabilizer according to any of the embodiments of the invention;

[0049] Figure 27 shows a bottom view of a floral attachment that may be attached to a backer/stabilizer according to any of the embodiments of the invention;

[0050] Figure 28 shows a top view of a ribbon according to a fourth embodiment of the invention;

[0051] Figure 29 shows a bottom view of the ribbon according to the fourth embodiment of the invention;

[0052] Figure 30 shows a bow with a ribbon according to the fourth embodiment of the invention attached thereto;

[0053] Figure 31 shows a floral card holder that may be coupled to an attachment mechanism according to the first or second embodiments of the invention;

[0054] Figure 32 shows a storage board that is configured to hold attachment mechanisms according to any of the embodiments of the invention;

[0055] Figure 33 shows a front view of a floral water tube holder that is coupled to an attachment mechanism according to the first or second embodiments of the invention;

[0056] Figure 34 shows a top view of the floral water tube holder that is coupled to an attachment mechanism according to the first or second embodiments of the invention;

[0057] Figure 35 shows a side view of a floral water tube holder that is coupled to an attachment mechanism according to the first or second embodiments of the invention;

[0058] Figure 36 shows a perspective view of the floral water tube holder that is coupled to an attachment mechanism according to the first or second embodiments of the invention;

[0059] Figure 37 shows a front view of a container that is coupled to an attachment mechanism according to the first or second embodiments of the invention;

[0060] Figure 38 shows a back view of a container that is coupled to an attachment mechanism according to the first or second embodiments of the invention; and

[0061] Figure 39 shows a top down view of a container that is coupled to an attachment mechanism according to the first or second embodiments of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SPECIFIC EMBODIMENTS

[0062] Preferred embodiments of the invention will be described in detail with reference to the drawings.

[0063] The present invention provides an attachment mechanism for attaching items, such as bows, crayon boxes, stuffed animals, flowers, flower tubes, etc., to gift wrapping. The present invention is simple to use, convenient, affordable, reusable, interchangeable, versatile and multi-purpose, and may be used in combination with other decorations on gift wrapping.

[0064] Figure 1 shows a front view of a bow 100, and Figure 2 shows a back view of the bow 100, which can be attached to an object, such as gift wrapping that is wrapped around a gift box, by usage of an attachment mechanism 110 according to a first embodiment of the invention. Any shaped bow, any item (e.g., stuffed toy, crayon box, ornamental magnet, etc.), or combination thereof, may be used with this attachment mechanism 110.

[0065] The bow 100 includes ribbon 12, which is formed in the shape of a bow and may be gathered in the center using any appropriate material. The bow 100 may be of a fabrication including but not limited to: fabric, tulle, paper, mylar, foil, film material, plastic, metal, a combination thereof, or any other material that suggests itself to one skilled in the art. A middle portion of the bow 100 is wrapped with ribbon 16, any suitable material, or combination thereof, to form a central part of the bow 100. The central part of the bow 100 is where the attachment mechanism 110 according to the first embodiment of the invention is attached.

[0066] Figure 3 shows the elements making up the attachment mechanism 110 according to the first embodiment, which may be used to removably

attach any type of item to another item. The attachment mechanism includes a first adhesive strip 300 that has a first adhering surface for adhering to the bow. The attachment mechanism also includes a backer/stabilizer 310 that has a first surface that is adhered to a second adhering surface of the first adhesive strip 300. The backer/stabilizer 310 is preferably a semi-rigid or rigid element, such as plastic, with a preferable thickness of between 1/32" to 1/16", e.g., slightly less than the thickness of a credit card. Of course, other thicknesses may be utilized while remaining within the scope of the invention as described herein. The backer/stabilizer 310 may alternatively be made out of card stock, poster board, or heavy paper, or any other suitable material, so that it has a semi-rigid composition to provide a stabilizing property to the object that it is attached to. The backer/stabilizer may also be made of styrofoam or spongy-type material (in addition to the other types of materials described above), with an adhesive surface provided (e.g., peel-and-stick adhesive tape) to adhere the backer/stabilizer to an object, such as to a small toy truck.

[0067] Also, the backer/stabilizer 310 is sized so as not to be too thick or too rigid. That way, staples can be punched through the backer/stabilizer 310 (by way of a stapler). This allows the backer/stabilizer 310 to be attached to a bow or the like if an adhesive strip (such as the first adhesive strip 300) is not utilized for that same purpose.

[0068] The attachment mechanism further includes a first Velcro® pad 320 that has a back side that is adhered to a second surface of the backer/stabilizer 310. The attachment mechanism 110 still further includes a second Velcro® pad 330 that is configured to be releasably attached to the first Velcro® pad 320. The attachment mechanism 110 also includes a second adhesive strip 340 that has a first adhering surface for adhering to a

back side of the second Velcro® pad 330. The second adhesive strip 340 also includes a second adhering surface for adhering to a surface of the second object. By way of example but not by way of limitation, the second object may be an outer surface of gift wrapping that has been wrapped around a gift or present.

[0069] The backer/stabilizer 310 provides a stabilizing surface to allow the bow 100 to be attached to the gift wrapping, without causing any damage to the bow 100 as it is attached to, and also is removed from, the gift wrapping.

[0070] In the first embodiment, the first Velcro® pad 320 is a female Velcro® pad (e.g., with loop fasteners), and the second Velcro® pad 330 is a male Velcro® pad (e.g., with hook fasteners). This is done so that debris (e.g., dust particles, hair, etc.) will not collect on the first Velcro® pad 320 attached to, and thereby stored with, the bow 100 between usages of the bow. A male Velcro® pad tends to collect more debris than a female Velcro® pad, which would hinder the adhering effectiveness of the Velcro® pad. Of course, the present invention would work with the Velcro® pads switched, but that might cause problems if there is sufficient debris to hinder the effectiveness of the Velcro® couplings for future usages of the bow 100.

[0071] As shown in Figure 2, the bow 100 with the attachment mechanism 110 attached to the central part thereof, is ready to be used for attachment to an object, such as gift wrapping. The second adhesive strip 340 (see Figure 3) preferably has a protective cover or strip on its second surface, whereby when the bow 100 is ready to be attached to gift wrapping, the protective cover or strip is peeled off of the second surface of the second

strip combination to the Velcro® pad already attached to the bow, to thereby configure a bow that is ready for reuse.

[0076] Figure 4 shows one configuration of a back side of a bow 400 that may be utilized with a different configuration of an attachment mechanism according to the first embodiment of the invention. Figure 5 shows another configuration of a back side of the bow 400, whereby an attachment mechanism is configured to be attached to a central part 510 of the bow 400, or a central part of the bow 400 may cover the wire wrapped around the center of the bow 400.

[0077] The bow 400 is constructed similarly to the bow 100 shown in Figures 1 and 2, whereby the bow 400 is also provided with an attachment piece or tying device, such as a thin wire 420, that is coupled to the central part 510 of the bow 400. For example, the thin wire 420 may be wrapped several times around the central part of the bow 400, as shown in Figure 4, to provide a strong coupling of the thin wire 420 to the bow 400. The wire may have a decorative attachment attached to it in the front of the bow 400, providing a decorative center. Alternatively, the wire 420 can be fitted through a ribbon on the central part of the bow 400, in the manner as shown in Figure 5.

[0078] An attachment device having a different configuration according to the first embodiment of the invention is shown in Figure 6, which is configured to be attached to the bow 400 of Figures 4 and 5. The only differences between the attachment device of the configuration shown in Figure 6 and the attachment device of the previously-described configurations of the first embodiment is that the backer/stabilizer 610 shown in Figure 6 includes a plurality of openings 620A, 620B, and the attachment device 410 of the configuration using the backer/stabilizer 610

of Figure 6 does not have a first adhesive strip for adhering the attachment device to the bow 400. Although two openings in the backer/stabilizer 610 are shown in Figure 6, one opening or more than two holes may be utilized, while remaining within the scope of the invention as described herein. Also, any item that suggests itself to those skilled in the art may be attached to the base.

~~[0079] The bow/item 400 is attached to the backer/stabilizer 610 using any method including but not limited to wire, covered wire, elastic band, twist tie, ribbon, zip lock, zip tie, plastic locking device, braid, interlocking pieces or pieces that fit together, clamp, decorative center, adjustable ring, a cone-shaped spike with a shaft and a base, any other mechanical device, adhesive process, bonding, or combinations thereof.~~

~~[0080] Referring now to Figures 4, 5 and 6, the backer/stabilizer 610 is attached to the bow 400 by fitting the two ends of the wire 420 respectively through the holes 620A, 620B of the backer/stabilizer 610. Once the two ends of the wire 420 have been fitted through the holes 620A, 620B, the two ends are tied, twisted or fastened together, to thereby provide a firm coupling of the backer/stabilizer 610 to the bow 410. The back surface of the first Velcro® pad 320 is adhered to the backer/stabilizer 610. For example, the back surface of the first Velcro® pad 320 may be glued or otherwise adhered onto the backer/stabilizer 610, it may be stapled to the backer/stabilizer 610, or it may be provided with an adhesive surface with a protective cover, whereby the protective cover is peeled off before the first Velcro® pad 320 is attached to the backer/stabilizer 610. The second Velcro® pad 330 and the second adhesive strip 340 are similar to the ones described with respect to the first embodiment. These steps are preferably performed during manufacturing of the attachment device/reusable bow~~

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~~structure. Alternatively, these steps can be done during construction of the~~
bow by a consumer, with appropriate instructions provided to assist the
consumer. The backer/stabilizer may be used with any shaped bow, other
item, or combination thereof. One or more items may be attached to the
backer/stabilizer (acting as a base).

000811 An attachment device having yet a different configuration according
to a first embodiment of the invention is shown in Figure 7. The
attachment device 700 according to the configuration shown in Figure 7 can
be utilized to releasably attach solid objects, such as a crayon box or a
stuffed, non-flexible toy penguin, to a gift package or the like. Unlike the
previously-described configurations of the first embodiment, no
backer/stabilizer is used in the configuration shown in Figure 7, since the
object to be attached to the gift wrap is solid enough such that a
backer/stabilizer is not necessary to provide a solid base for the attachment
device 700. The attachment device 700 includes a first Velcro® pad 320
with a back surface that is adhered to the object to be attached to the gift
wrap. The back surface may have an adhesive compound, or it may be
coupled to a double-sided adhesive tape 710, or it may be glued, stapled,
sewn or otherwise affixed to the object. For example, the back surface may
be affixed to a bottom surface of a toy penguin or toy car that is to be
attached to gift wrap or to some other object.

000821 The attachment device 700 also includes a second Velcro® pad 330
with a back surface that has an adhesive material, as well as a protective
cover or protective film 720 on the back surface. The front surfaces of the
first and second Velcro® pads 320, 330 are releasably attached to each
other, by way of the adhering elements (hooks and loop fasteners, Velcro)
on those front surfaces.

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[0083] When a person desires to attach the object to gift wrap or to some other object, the protective film 720 is peeled off from the back surface of the second Velcro® pad 330, and then the attachment device 700 is adhered to the object. To remove the object from the gift wrap, the first and second Velcro® pads 320, 330 are pulled apart from each other, thereby leaving the second Velcro® pad 330 on the gift wrap. The object is left with the first Velcro® pad 320 affixed thereto, which can be readily removed from the object, such as by peeling off the first Velcro® pad 320 from the object. This should preferably be done with care, to ensure that the object is not harmed during this process. In that way, the object can be reused at a later date, or used as a gift separate from the gift that is wrapped within the gift wrap.

[0084] An attachment device according to yet another configuration of an attachment mechanism according to the first embodiment of the invention will be described with reference to Figure 8. The attachment device according to the configuration shown in Figure 8 is similar to the attachment device according to the configuration shown in Figure 6, with the only difference being instead of having holes, a backer/stabilizer 810 of the attachment device of Figure 8 has several arrow-shaped slits 820 extending through an entire thickness of the backer/stabilizer 810. Alternatively, the slits may be straight lines (e.g., disposed along a widthwise direction of the backer/stabilizer 810). By way of the slits 820, an object, such as a barrette or a hair pin, can be fitted through the backer/stabilizer 810, to thereby releasably attach the object to the attachment device.

[0085] In more detail, referring now to Figure 9, a leg of a barrette 830 or other type of object is placed on a top surface of the backer/stabilizer 810.

Then, the leg of the barrette 830 is fitted down through a first slit 820 of the backer/stabilizer 810, so that it now faces a bottom surface of the backer/stabilizer 810. The leg of the barrette 830 is then pushed through a second slit 820 of the backer/stabilizer 810, so that this leg of the barrette 830 now faces the top surface of the backer/stabilizer 810. The two legs of the barrette 830 can then be clasped together, to thereby provide an easy way to releasably attach the barrette 830 to the backer/stabilizer 810 (and thereby to the other elements of the attachment device), without having to glue or otherwise affix the barrette 830 to the attachment device (of which the backer/stabilizer 810 is an element thereof).

[0086] An attachment device according to a second embodiment of the invention will be described with reference to Figures 10 and 11. Figure 10 shows a front side of an object 1000, and Figure 11 shows a back side of the object 1000, whereby magnets 1010 are provided on the back side. The object 1000 is preferably a decorative object, and may be attached to a refrigerator door or the like. The object 1000 may contain a photograph or ornamental design 1020 on its front side, for example, and/or the object 1000 may have a distinctive shape, such as a shape like a bug, a butterfly, a spoon, or some other decorative shape.

[0087] In the second embodiment, the object 1000 is used as a decoration in gift wrapping, and then it can be removed from the gift wrapping and used later as a magnet (e.g., for attachment to a refrigerator). Referring now to Figure 11, a female Velcro® strip 1120 is attached to the back side of the object 1000. The female Velcro® strip 1120 is preferably attached to the object 1000 by way of adhesive material on the back side of the female Velcro® strip 1120. The adhesive material may be a self-adhesive material, glue or some other type of sticky composition. The female Velcro® strip

1120 is positioned apart from the magnets 1010 on the back side of the object 1000, so that it does not interfere with the magnetic properties of the magnets 1010. In an alternative configuration, the entire object is formed out of a magnetic material.

[0088] In a preferred construction, a male Velcro® strip (not shown) is coupled to the female Velcro® strip 1120 by way of a releasable coupling of the female and male Velcro® strips. The male Velcro® strip preferably has a back side with an adhesive material disposed thereon, with a protective covering on the back side to allow the back side of the male Velcro® strip to be rested an object without sticking to the object 1000.

[0089] When a person desires to affix the object to a gift wrapping, for example, that person peels off the protective covering from the back side of the male Velcro® strip (which is coupled to the object 1000 by way of its attachment to the female Velcro® strip 1120). With the protective covering peeled off, the person can then position the object 1000 to a desired location on gift wrapping. This affixes the object 1000 onto the gift wrapping, and also allows someone to remove the object 1000 from the gift wrapping at a later time with little effort on their part.

[0090] Once the object 1000 has been removed from the gift wrapping, which is done by separating the female Velcro® strip 1120 from the male Velcro® strip, the male Velcro® strip remain on the gift wrapping, and typically cannot be reused. However, like the first embodiment, all one has to do is to obtain an extra male Velcro® strip with adhesive backing on its other side, and then affix a male Velcro® strip to the female Velcro® strip 1120 still attached to the object 1000. That way, the object 1000 can be attached to another gift to be wrapped by gift wrapping at a later time, if desired.

[0091] Alternatively, once the object 1000 has been removed from the gift wrapping, the female Velcro® strip 1120 can be peeled off of the back side of the object 1000 (by peeling off the adhesive material on the back side of the female Velcro® strip 1120 from the back side of the object 1000), to allow the object to function for its intended purpose as a magnet to be affixed to a metal object, such as being magnetically coupled to a metal refrigerator door.

[0092] While the second embodiment has been described as having the female Velcro® strip 1120 attached directly to the object 1000, in an alternative configuration, a male Velcro® strip may be attached directly to the object 1000, thereby trading places with the female Velcro® strip 1120. However, it is desirable to have the female Velcro® strip 1120 directly attached to the object 1000, since they typically collect less dust and debris than do male Velcro® strips, thereby making them better for future reattachments of the object 1000 to gift wrapping by way of the attachment device according to the second embodiment.

[0093] Figure 12 shows one side of a two-part stabilizer with a hanger/display card 1210 according to a third embodiment of the invention, and Figure 13 shows the opposite side of the backer/stabilizer with a hanger/display card 1210. The backer/stabilizer with a hanger/display card 1210 is preferably formed out of a sturdy, durable material. Such durable material may be plastic, metal, cardboard, poster board, rigid paper card stock, heavy paper board, a combination of any two or more of these, or any other suitable material. The backer/stabilizer may have any base shape to accommodate the object being attached to it, including but not limited to: flat, openings, molded, die cut, or bases with the method of attachment part

of it. All means of attachment may be utilized, as described above with respect to the previous embodiments.

[0094] The backer/stabilizer with a hanger/display card 1210 includes a hanger/display card portion 1250 for attaching the backer/stabilizer 1260 to a hanger or display of a retail store or other establishment that may want to sell these types of devices. The backer/stabilizer with a hanger/display card 1210 also the backer/stabilizer 1260 to attach an object, such as a bow or ribbon, or other type of object, to another object (such as a gift package, a box, a bag, etc.). The object being attached to the backer/stabilizer 1260 may be attached by any of the ways with respect to the previous embodiments described earlier, such as by an adhesive strip, being glued on, being sewn on, being stapled on, etc.

[0095] The backer/stabilizer 1260 is severally attachable to the hanger/display card portion 1250, by way of a line of tear perforations (perforated line 1270). That way, the hanger/display card portion 1250 can be easily separated from the backer/stabilizer 1260.

[0096] In one possible construction, the hanger/display card portion 1250 is of a construction and size to allow a small to medium-sized note to be written thereon (such as by way of a felt-tip pen), to thereby serve as a gift tag when an object is attached to gift wrapping using a device according to the third embodiment.

[0097] In an alternative configuration, text and other product information may be printed on the face of the hanger/display card portion 1250. This information may include product information, logo, suggested uses of the product, etc. Further, text and other product information may be printed on the back of the hanger/display card portion 1250. This information may

include UPC codes, pricing, product information, company information, etc.

[0098] Figure 13 shows an attachment device 1300 according to any of the embodiments of the invention attached to the backer/stabilizer 1260 of the backer/stabilizer with a hanger/display card 1210, and Figure 14 shows various elements of the attachment device 1300 separated from each other in an exploded view. One element of the attachment device 1300 is a female Velcro® part 320, with an adhesive material on its other side. Another element of the attachment device 1300 is a male Velcro® pad 330, with a peel-off protective covering 340 (for covering an adhesive material) attached to its other side. An object, such as a bow, may be attached to the backer/stabilizer 1260 by using staples 1350 as shown in Figure 12. Any other suitable method of attaching an object to the backer/stabilizer 1260 may be utilized.

[0099] Figure 15 shows a front perspective view of a backer/stabilizer with card and with hanger/display card 1510 according to a different configuration of the third embodiment of the invention, and Figure 16 shows a back perspective view of the backer/stabilizer with card and with hanger/display card 1510. The backer/stabilizer with card and hanger/display card 1510 includes three separable portions. A first, or head, separable portion 1520 is a display/hanger portion. A second, or middle, separable portion 1530 is a writable decorated card portion. A third, or end, separable portion 1540 is an backer/stabilizer 1540. This configuration of the third embodiment is different from the configuration of the third embodiment shown in Figures 12 and 13 in that the hanger/display portion of this configuration embodiment is broken up into two separable portions. Also shown in Figure 15 in exploded view is a first

attachment device coupled to the third separable portion 1540 and a second attachment device coupled to the second separable portion 1530.

[00100] In an alternative configuration, text and other product information may be printed on the face of the hanger/display card portion 1520. This information may include product information, logo, suggested uses of the product, etc. Further, text and other product information may be printed on the back of the hanger/display card portion 1520. This information may include UPC codes, pricing, product information, company information, etc.

[00101] As seen in Figure 16, an attachment device 1610 according to any of the previously-described embodiments may be attached to the backer/stabilizer 1540. Also, the middle portion 1530, which serves as a portion for someone to write a note to be included with an object to be releasably attached to gift wrapping, includes an attachment device 1570 (self-adhesive female Velcro, self-adhesive male Velcro, peel-off protective covering) to allow the note to be attached to the gift wrapping if the note is to be saved (e.g., as a memento), preferably nearby to where the object is to be attached to the gift wrapping. Alternatively, just an adhesive strip with a protective cover may be used instead.

[00102] Figures 17, 18, 19 and 20 show several possible different configurations of backer/stabilizers of attachment mechanisms according to the first or second embodiments of the invention. In these configurations of the first or second embodiments, the attachment mechanism (an object fastens or secures itself onto the backer/stabilizer) hangs on an object, as opposed to being directly adhered to the object. The backer/stabilizer may be produced in any manner including but not limited to: using any shape, configuration, size, coloration, fabrication, to accommodate an object. The

object may be attached to the backer/stabilizer using any method of attachment as described previously with respect to the previous embodiments. Any special shape of a backer/stabilizer may be designed and used to accommodate a product with respect to a backer/stabilizer, in accordance with the teachings of the present invention as provided herein.

[00103] One surface of the backer/stabilizers according to the configurations shown in Figures 17-20 is adhered to a (preferably female) Velcro® pad, as in the other-described configurations (whereby a male Velcro pad is releasably attached to the female Velcro pad and with a protective covering provided on an opposite adhesive surface of the male Velcro pad). The other surface of the backer/stabilizers of Figures 17-20 is coupled to an object to be placed on gift wrapping, by way of the particular structural configuration of the backer/stabilizers. An object may be connected to the backer/stabilizer using any means of attachment as described previously, as well as other known to those skilled in the art.

[00104] In particular, Figure 17 shows a backer/stabilizer 1710 with circular-shaped cutouts 1720A, 1720B at respective ends of the backer/stabilizer 1710. With such a construction, an object, such as a barrette, clothespin, or hair clip, can be attached to the backer/stabilizer 1710 by clipping the object at the cutout locations. In that regard, no adhesive or gluing needs to be done in order to attach the object to the backer/stabilizer 1710.

[00105] Figure 18 shows a backer/stabilizer 1810 with square-shaped cutouts 18020A, 18020B provided at end portions of the backer/stabilizer 1810. With such a construction, one object can be attached (or clipped) to cutout 1820A, and another object can be attached (or clipped) to cutout 1820B. One object may attach itself using both cutout 1820A and cutout 1820B.

[00106] For the backer/stabilizer, any shape, cut out shape, color, size, and fabrication may be used in accordance with this embodiment. Any method of attachment may be used to accommodate an object to affix it to the backer/stabilizer.

[00107] Figure 19 shows a backer/stabilizer 1910 with groove-shaped cutouts 1920A, 1920B. Figure 20 shows a back view of the backer/stabilizer 1910 with a channel groove 1930 extending along a central portion thereof.

[00108] Figure 19 shows the front view of the backer/stabilizer 1910 with channel-shaped cutouts or slits in the sides of the backer/stabilizer 1910 with circular endpoints 1920A, 1920B. The backer/stabilizer 1910 may have a plane (flat) back. Figure 20 shows one alternative of the back view of the same backer/stabilizer 1910 with a channel groove 1930 extending along a central portion thereof between the openings 1920A and 1920B. The channel groove 1930 may be a groove that extends downwards into one-half to two-thirds of the thickness of the backer/stabilizer 1910, for example.

[00109] In an alternate configuration, Figure 20 may correspond to a front view of a backer/stabilizer, whereby an object, such as a pencil or pen, can releasably attached to the backer/stabilizer 1910 by a person fitting the pencil or pen into the channel groove 1930. The channel groove 2020 can be sized based on the object to be held within the channel groove 1930. For example, to use with a pencil, the sides of the backer/stabilizer 1910 would be sized to accommodate the pencil.

[00110] For each of the backer/stabilizers shown in Figures 17-20, the object to be attached to gift wrapping is attached to the backer/stabilizers by non-adhesive means (adhesive may be used if deemed necessary or a combination of methods of attachment may be used). For example,

referring to Figure 21, for example, an elastic band 2110 may be fitted around the backer/stabilizer 1710, and through the respective cutouts 1720A, 1720B (see Figure 17). The elastic band 2110 is situated such that a part of it is disposed and held between one surface of the backer/stabilizer 1710 and an adhesive (top) surface of a female Velcro® pad 320, thereby holding a part of the elastic band in place with respect to the backer/stabilizer 1710. The end points of the elastic band are preferably disposed between the backer/stabilizer 1710 and the adhesive (top) surface of the female Velcro pad 320. If a channel back is used, such as with the backer/stabilizer of Figure 20, the elastic band 2110 would fit in the channel 1930 of the backer/stabilizer 1910, so that the Velcro pad 320 would lie flat against the backer/stabilizer 1910. Another part of elastic band is situated above an opposite surface (top surface as shown in Figure 21) of the backer/stabilizer 1710.

[00111] For example, for about a 2" length elastic band that is fitted around a 1" square-shaped backer/stabilizer, a loop is formed by the elastic band above one surface of the backer/stabilizer. The loop can be stretched to twice or three times its normal size due to the elastic property of the elastic band, whereby it reverts back to its normal size when the elastic band is released. With such a configuration, a toy, such as a stuffed bear or stuffed gorilla, can be releasably attached to the backer/stabilizer, and thereby to an attachment device, by stretching the elastic band (already attached to the backer/stabilizer in a manner as described above) around a neck portion or other suitable holding portion of the toy animal, to thereby hold the toy animal in place with respect to the attachment device. Then, the attachment device is attached to gift wrapping, with the toy animal also attached to the

gift wrapping due to it being releasably attached to the attachment device by way of the elastic band.

[00112] Referring back to Figure 6, another possible construction of a "hanging type" backer/stabilizer according to the first or second embodiments has two holes 620A, 620B near opposing ends of the backer/stabilizer, whereby an elastic wire (or other type of elastic element) can be fitted therethrough, and then coupled together to form a band. When a Velcro® pad is adhered to one surface of the backer/stabilizer, the elastic band would be situated between the one surface of the backer/stabilizer and the Velcro® pad, thereby firmly affixing the elastic band in place against the backer/stabilizer.

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[00113] Figure 22 shows yet another configuration of a backer/stabilizer 2210 of an attachment device according the first or second embodiments of the invention. The backer/stabilizer 2210 has a dome-shaped construction, with an opening 2220 extending almost all the way through a central portion of the backer/stabilizer 2210. An object, such as a flag pole 2230 and flag 2240 combination, can be fitted into the opening 2220 of the backer/stabilizer 2210, thereby holding the object in place as the backer/stabilizer (and the attachment device that the backer/stabilizer 2210 is a part thereof) is releasably coupled to gift wrap. The flag pole 2230 can be readily removed after it serves its purpose as an ornament for the gift wrap, by pulling the flag out of the hole of the backer/stabilizer 2210. The other elements of the attachment device of this configuration include female and male Velcro® pads, and adhering surfaces for those pads, and a protective covering as described with respect to previously-described configurations. The backer/stabilizer 2210 is shown as having a dome-shaped construction, but any shape or configuration may be used in

accordance with the teachings of the present invention. Any object may be supported by the backer/stabilizer 2210, and attached in any manner, such as in the manners as described with respect to the previous embodiments.

[00114] Other objects, such as wired or plastic ornaments or the like, can be fitted into the hole of the backer/stabilizer 2210, which acts as a base for the object attached to it. Alternatively the backer/stabilizer may be formed out of any material including but not limited to plastic or a Styrofoam® material, whereby an ornament can be held onto the backer/stabilizer by fitting one end of the ornament into the backer/stabilizer.

[00115] Figure 23 shows yet another configuration of a backer/stabilizer 2310 of an attachment device according to the first or second embodiments of the invention. The backer/stabilizer 2310 includes a spike or nub 2320, to which an object can be coupled thereto. The spike or nub 2320 may be integral to the backer/stabilizer 2310 (e.g., formed from the same material in a single fabrication process), or it may be affixed to the backer/stabilizer 2310 (e.g., glued to a surface of the backer/stabilizer 2310). For example, artificial or silk flowers typically have hollow bases, and the spike or nub 2320 can be sized to accept a hollow base 2330 of an artificial or silk flower that is fitted thereto. Once fitted on the backer/stabilizer 2310 (which is attached to a female Velcro® pad of an attachment device), the artificial or silk flower can be releasably attached to gift wrap, in a manner as described previously with respect to other configurations described previously. The spike or nub 2320 may be somewhat flexible, such as being a rubber or flexible plastic material, or it may be configured so that it is non-flexible (e.g., plastic part). Any suitable material may be used for the spike or nub 2320. Leaves, other flowers, or other decorations may be added or adhered to the base, thereby enhancing the decoration. Glue or other adhesive may

be used to strengthen the connection between the spike/nub and the part coupling to it.

[00116] Figure 24 shows yet another configuration of a backer/stabilizer 2410 of an attachment device according to the first or second embodiments of the invention. The backer/stabilizer 2410 includes a cup-shaped element 2420, to which a stub end 2430 of an object can be coupled thereinto. Once fitted on the backer/stabilizer 2410 (which is attached to a female Velcro pad of an attachment device), the object can be releasably attached to gift wrap, in a manner as described previously with respect to other configurations previously described. The cup-shaped element 2420 may be integral with the backer/stabilizer 2410, or it may be rigidly affixed to it (such as by gluing it onto the backer/stabilizer 2410).

[00117] Figure 25 shows yet another configuration of a backer/stabilizer 2510 of an attachment device according to the first or second embodiments of the invention. The backer/stabilizer 2510 has a cone-shaped element 2520 extending out from the surface that is not coupled to the Velcro pad. An object having a snap-on type of fitting 2530 can be snap-fitted onto the cone-shaped element 2520, to thereby hold the object onto the backer/stabilizer 2510. In that manner, when an attachment device that includes the backer/stabilizer 2510 is releasably attached to gift wrap, the object also is attached (releasably) to the gift wrap.

[00118] The backer/stabilizers shown in Figures 17-25 are constructed such that the backer/stabilizers can accommodate a particular product or object that is to be attached to them. Several examples have been provided above, and other shapes may be contemplated by one skilled in the art, while remaining within the scope of the invention. Other male/female coupling

devices beyond those shown in Figures 23-25 can be utilized with a backer/stabilizer according to the embodiments of the present invention.

[00119] Figure 26 shows a top view and Figure 27 shows a bottom view of a floral attachment 2700 that may be coupled to an attachment device 2710 with a backer/stabilizer according to any of the previously-described embodiments. For example, a backer/stabilizer as shown in any of Figures 3, 6-9, or 12-25 may be used. The attachment device 2710 may be attached to the floral attachment 2700 by self-adhesive (e.g., peel-n-stick), glued, bonded, or adhered in any reasonable manner. Furthermore, the floral attachment 2700 may be adhered to the attachment device 2710 by mechanical means, such as by stapling, elastic band, twist tie, wire, ribbon, string, nylon, zip lock, sewn on, double-sided tape, or any other suitable material or mechanical device. Any floral design may be used with the attachment device 2710 shown in Figure 26.

[00120] Figure 28 shows a top view and Figure 29 shows a bottom view of a ribbon 2900 according to a fourth embodiment of the invention. The ribbon 2900 includes Velcro® strips 2910A, 2910B, 2910C (strip 2910C is an optional strip). The Velcro® strips 2910A, 2910B, 2910C may be sewn onto the ribbon 2900, or adhered to the ribbon by self-adhesive, glue, double-stick tape, or in any other suitable manner.

[00121] The ribbon 2900 may be precut to a particular length, and it may be cut to match the size of the object that it is be wrapped around.

[00122] One end of the ribbon 2900 may be cut or folded (wrong sides together approximately 1/2") in a shape (e.g. straight, angle, arrow, and finished), pattern, or design (pinked, scalloped). A female Velcro® strip 2910A is adhered to one surface of the ribbon 2900 near one end of the ribbon 2900, at approximately ¼" from the end. Of course, other distances

may be contemplated while remaining within the scope of the invention. If the female Velcro® strip 2910A has a protective covering that protects an adhesive surface, the protective covering is first removed, and then the female Velcro® strip 2910A is adhered to the ribbon 2900.

[00123] The ends of the ribbon 2900 may be gathered or remain flat, according to the appearance wanting to be created and according to where the ribbon is to be fastened to gift wrap. The gathering may be by any suitable means, such as by sewing, use of wire, etc.

[00124] The length of the Velcro® strips 2910A, 2910B, 2910C may vary according to the width of the ribbon 2900 that they are to be affixed to. ½" to 1" width Velcro® is the typical size for most ribbons. The Velcro® strips 2910A, 2910B, 2910C should be the same length or a little shorter than the width of the ribbon end. If the end is gathered, the Velcro® should be shorter than if the end is not gathered. The color of the Velcro® should be co-ordinate with the color of the ribbon 2900.

[00125] The Velcro® strip 2910B is adhered to the opposite surface and the opposite end of the ribbon 2900, with respect to the Velcro® strip 2910A. The Velcro® strip 2910B may be adhered to the ribbon 2900 by any suitable means, such as the ones described with respect to the Velcro® strip 2910A. The Velcro® strip 2910B is preferably a male Velcro® strip, and the Velcro® strip 2910A is preferably a female Velcro® strip.

[00126] If the length of the ribbon has not been predetermined, the following steps may be performed. First, the self-adhesive male Velcro with a protective cover is mated to the female Velcro. Then, one determines the length of the ribbon needed by placing it where it will be used. One then peels off the protective covering and adheres the male Velcro to the front right side of the ribbon, fitting it snugly. If necessary, the Velcro ribbon is

removed, and excess ribbon that is past the male Velcro on the bottom is cut off. Then, the ribbon is replaced around the object.

[00127] The center Velcro® strip 2910C is preferably a male Velcro® strip, and adheres to a female Velcro® strip on a bow that has an attachment device according to any of the embodiments of the present invention attached thereto (see attachment device 2710 in Figure 27, for example).

[00128] Thus, there has been described a Velcro ribbon for attachment to an object, a Velcro ribbon with an extra Velcro pad on the back for attachment to an object. Also, there may be utilized a Velcro ribbon with an object already attached to it by using any attachment means other than Velcro.

[00129] Figure 30 shows a bow 3000 with a ribbon 2900 according to the fourth embodiment of the invention attached thereto. The Velcro® strip 2910C on the ribbon 2900 (see Figure 29) is coupled to a Velcro® strip (not shown) on a central part 3020 of the bow 3000. Alternatively, the Velcro strip 2910C may be placed anywhere (e.g., a non-central portion) on the ribbon 2900. The bow 3000 may be attached to the ribbon 2900 in any direction. With the ribbon 2900 coupled to the bow 3000 in such a manner, the ends of the ribbon 2900 can be coupled to each other to form a loop, by way of Velcro® strips 2910A and 2910B at the ends of the ribbon 2900.

For example, the ribbon 2900 may be looped around a gift package, and whereby the ends of the ribbon 2900 are coupled together by way of their respective Velcro® strips 2910A, 2910B, in order to releasably attach the bow 3000 to the gift package or some other object (box, bag, basket, floral arrangement, etc.). Any conceivable item may be attached to the ribbon 2900 using any method of attachment described previously, permanent or temporary. Also, any item, such as a bow, floral, etc., may be permanently attached to the ribbon 2900 in any direction.

[00130] Figure 31 shows a floral card holder 3100 that may be coupled to an attachment mechanism according to the first or second embodiments of the invention. The floral card holder 3100, which can be any type of commercially available floral card holder, includes a Velcro® pad 3110 adhered thereto in accordance with the present invention. With such an arrangement, a ribbon, bow, or other ornamental object having an attachment device according to the first or second embodiments of the present invention, can be releasably attached to the floral card holder 3100, by coupling the Velcro® pad of the attachment device to the Velcro® pad 3110 of the floral card holder 3100.

[00131] Since the ornaments to be coupled to attachment devices according to the present invention are to be reused, it is important that they be stored such that they do not collect dust and debris between uses.

[00132] Figure 32 shows a storage element 3200 that is configured to hold attachment mechanisms according to any of the embodiments of the invention. The storage element 3200 is used to store reusable ornaments between uses of the ornaments. The storage element 3200 is constructed of a material sufficiently strong (e.g., wood, cardboard, plastic, fabric, etc.) to hold ornaments in place. The storage element 3200 has a plurality of rows and columns of Velcro® pads 3210. Other dispositions of the Velcro pads 3210 may be contemplated while remaining within the scope of the invention (e.g., circularly placed on the storage element 3200, for example, or randomly placed on the storage element 3200). For example, the storage element 3200 may be a fabric board of 36" wide by 38" long. Of course, other materials and sizes of the storage element 3200 may be contemplated while remaining within the scope of the invention.

[00133] The Velcro® pads 3210 are preferably spaced 6" apart from each other, to allow for fairly large sized ornaments to be placed on the storage board 3200 without interfering with each other. When an ornament with an attachment device according to any of the embodiments of the present invention is removed from gift wrapping, the male Velcro® pad is left on the gift wrapping, thereby leaving the female Velcro® pad as the most-exterior portion of the attachment device on the ornament. The female Velcro® pad on the attachment device is coupled to any of the male Velcro® pads 3210 on the storage board 3200, to hold the ornament in place for storage between uses.

[00134] Figure 32 also shows a hanger cord 3220 that is used to hang the storage board 3200 onto a wall. For example, a hanger cord 3220 of 50" in length may be utilized. The hanger cord 3220 is tied in a knot around the ends of a dowel rod 3230 or may fit in slits made in the ends of the dowel rod 3230 and knotted, and then the storage element 3200 can be hung on a wall by nailing the hanger cord 3220 in place. Of course, other ways of hanging the storage element 3200 may be contemplated. Also, the storage element 3200 may be configured just to hold ornaments (whereby the storage element 3200 would be stored under a bed or in a closet, for example), and not for hanging on a wall.

[00135] Furthermore, the storage board 3200 may include a dust screen (not shown) on its front face, in order to keep debris off the ornaments affixed to the Velcro® pads 3210 of the storage board 3200 while they are being stored between uses.

[00136] Figure 33 shows a front view of a floral water tube (capped floral vase) 3340, holder 3300 and back plate 3320 that is coupled to an attachment mechanism according to the first or second embodiments of the

invention, and Figure 34 shows a top view of the floral water tube (capped floral vase) holder 3300. The holder 3300 is coupled to an object for which a floral arrangement is to be attached. For example, a side surface of a gift wrap may be a place where a floral arrangement is to be attached. The circular ringlet 3310 is attached to a back plate 3320 or may be molded in one piece. Also shown in Figure 34 is a female Velcro pad 3420, a male Velcro pad 3430, and an adhesive strip 3440, in an exploded view. In an alternative configuration, the circular ringlet 3210 may also have an extension out from the back plate 3320. The circular ringlet 3210 may be of a material that is sufficient to hold the floral arrangement, such as, by way of example but not by way of limitation: plastic, metal, wood, etc. The back plate 3320 is coupled to an attachment device 3330 according to any of the previous embodiments of the invention, in order to releasably attach the floral water tube holder 3300 to the gift wrap or any other object to which the floral arrangement is to be attached.

[00137] A capped floral water tube 3340 can then be fitted into the circular ringlet 3310, with flowers and water provided in the floral water tube 3340, as shown in the front view of Figure 33. Cap 3620 is shown in Figure 33 and Figure 35.

[00138] Figure 35 shows a side view of a floral water tube holder 3500, whereby the floral water tube holder 3500 has a Velcro® pad adhered to an outer surface of the floral water tube holder 3500. The Velcro® pad 3600 attached to the floral water tube holder 3500 can be seen in the perspective view shown in Figure 36. The Velcro® pad 3600 of the floral water tube holder 3500 is releasably coupled to a Velcro® pad that is adhered to an object such as gift wrap. A cap 3620 for the floral water tube holder 3500 is also shown in Figure 36, and operates to hold the flower/flowers and

water within the floral water tube holder 3500. Alternative methods of attachment include but are not limited to: magnets, double stick tape, and sticky backing. A cap may have one or more openings for flowers, and still can be used with in accordance with this embodiment.

[00139] Referring to Figure 36, a floral vase constructed in accordance with the present invention is designated generally by reference numeral 3500. The floral vase 3500 is generally of a tubular construction (not necessarily cylindrical in shape). The material of construction is not critical. If it is being used for live flowers or plants, it needs to be waterproof and not rust. It may be made of a relatively rigid synthetic polymeric material, molded plastic, molded polystyrene product, glass, crystal, metal, pottery, or any other suitable material. It may be any color, shape, size, texture, pattern, design, or combination thereof. It may be decorated in any manner using any items applicable. It may be used to convey a message and may have the ability to be personalized. It is filled with water in a water reservoir, if live flowers or plants are placed therein. An additive may be combined with the water to nourish the live flower or plants. The floral vase also includes an open top end whose opening is surrounded by a ridge and a closed bottom end.

[00140] A cap 3620 is fitted over the open top end of the floral vase 3500 and has an aperture (opening) through which the stem of a flower or plant is inserted endwise, extending the stem into the water retained in the water reservoir.

[00141] Figure 37 shows a container 3700 that is coupled to an attachment mechanism according to the first or second embodiments of the invention. The container 3700 is configured to be releasably attached to an object, such as gift wrap, by way of an attachment device according to any of the

embodiments of the invention. The container 3700 may have any shape, and is shown with a lid 3710 for holding a toy or other present within the container 3700. The lid 3710 is optional and may attach in any manner known to those skilled in the art. The material of construction of the container 3700 and lid 3710 is not critical, and it may be of a relatively rigid synthetic polymeric material, molded plastic, molded polystyrene product, glass, crystal, metal, pottery, paper products, or any other suitable material. It may be of any color, shape, size, texture, pattern, design, or combination thereof. It may be decorated in any manner using any items applicable. It may be used to convey a message 3720, such as "You've Been Kissed" or "Lauren", as shown in Figure 37. Different messages may be provided on transparent adhesive strips, whereby one or more messages can be readily adhered to the container 3700 and readily removed from the container 3700, as desired. A special marking pen may be used to personalize the item.

[00142] Figure 38 shows a back side of the container 3700 with an adhesive strip 3810 provided thereon. The adhesive strip 3810 is adhered to the back side of the container 3700, whereby the protective covering (shown by diagonal lines) of the adhesive strip 3810 is shown in Figure 38. The protective covering can be removed by peeling it off, to thereby attach the container 3700 to another object, such as a refrigerator or to a gift.

[00143] As shown in the top-down view of Figure 39, a female Velcro® strip 3910 is adhered to the adhesive strip 3740, to thereby adhere the female Velcro® strip 3910 to the container 3700. A male Velcro® strip 3920 is engaged with the female Velcro® strip 3910, whereby the adhesive side of the male Velcro® strip 3920 opposite its Velcro side is covered with a protective covering 3930. To attach the container 3700 to something, such

as to gift wrap, the protective covering 3930 is removed, and then the container 3700 can then be easily attached, in a releasable manner, to the gift wrap or other object. Alternatively, the Velcro may be applied to the bottom surface of the container 3700 rather than the back of the container 3700.

[00144] Alternative methods of attachment include but are not limited to: magnets, double stick tape, pressure-sensitive adhesive, and sticky backing.

[00145] Thus, several embodiments of the present invention. Many modifications and variations may be made to the techniques and structures described and illustrated herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. While only certain embodiments have been set forth, alternative embodiments and various modifications will be apparent to those skilled in the art. These and other alternatives are considered equivalent and within the sprit and scope of the present invention. Accordingly, it should be understood that the methods and apparatus described herein are illustrative only and are not limiting upon the scope of the invention.

[00146] For example, backer/stabilizers according to the present invention may include any shape, sizes, color, fabrication, texture, decorative, as it may suggest itself to those skilled in the art. The fastening means, described with respect to Velcro hereinabove, may be any color, strength, shape, size, and include other types of reattachable fastening devices other than hook and loop.

[00147] Also, one or more items may be attached to a backer/stabilizer according to any of the embodiments of the invention described above. One or more different methods of attachment may be used to attach the one or more objects to a backer/stabilizer according to any of the embodiments of the invention described previously. For example, a flower attached to a

backer/stabilizer may use a spike and glue combination, and additional flowers or leaves may be glued to the backer/stabilizer, and also a ribbon may be attached to the same backer/stabilizer.

[00148] Also, multi-floral arrangements may be attached to other objects by using an attachment device in accordance with any of the embodiments of the present invention.

[00149] Also, for floral arrangements, the Velcro may be placed on the stem or part of the stem of the flowers in the floral arrangements.

[00150] Further, as explained above, the attachment devices according to the different embodiments of the present invention may be used to attach any type of object to any type of object, and not just for attaching bows to gift wrap.

[00151] In an alternative method and structure of attaching an object and backer/stabilizer to another object, a Command Strip™ made by 3M® Corporation may be used instead of releasable attaching devices such as Velcro. The Command Strip™ has a first region with adhesive on both sides, with protective covering on both sides. The Command Strip™ has a spongy-like second region which is non-adhesive and which serves as a tab for removing the Command Strip™ from an object that it is adhered to. In the alternative method and structure according to the invention, the protective strip on one side of the first region is removed, and adhered to a backer/stabilizer according to any of the embodiments of the invention. Then, the protective strip on the other side is removed, and is adhered to another object (e.g., gift wrap). When one desires to remove the object (e.g., a bow) from the other object (e.g., gift wrap), one just pulls on the tab on the second region of the Command Strip™, to thereby peel the Command Strip™ (with backer/stabilizer and object adhered thereto) from

the other object. To reuse the object, all one has to do is to peel off the "used" Command Strip™ from the backer/stabilizer, using the tab on the second region of the Command Strip™ to assist in this removal. With the Command Strip™ removed, one then places a unused Command Strip™ on the backer/stabilizer, in the manner as discussed above. Of course, other devices instead of 3M's Command Strip™ for attaching a backer/stabilizer to an object, whereby the device attached to a backer/stabilizer can be replaced or removed and replaced by a new device, can be utilized in this alternative method and structure of the present invention.

[00152] In an alternative method and structure of attaching an object to another object, any method of attachment may be used, beyond the ones described above.

[00153] In an alternative method and structure of attaching an object to another object, for objects being reused with another purpose (e.g., barrette/bow/ornament or truck/ornament) other than ornamentation, a method of adhesion for single use may be utilized.